

Minister: Easter holiday can't be fixed without Church support

Posted: Tue, 5th Apr 2022

The government will not fix the Easter holiday dates without support from the Church of England despite the benefits to schools, a minister has said.

In a letter to the National Secular Society, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets Paul Scully MP said businesses and schools "would benefit from the clarity" of implementing an annual fixed date for public holidays around Easter.

But he added the government does not think it would be "suitable" to fix the dates "without input and agreement from the Church or other Christian Bodies".

His letter follows a [question](#) from Greg Knight MP in October asking if he would take steps to bring into force the provisions of the Easter Act 1928 to fix the date of the Easter public holidays.

The Act would fix the Easter Sunday public holiday as the Sunday following the second Saturday in April, instead of following the date for Easter as a moveable feast.

This would not affect the freedom of religions to continue to celebrate the festival of Easter as a moveable feast if they wished. The Eastern and Western Christian churches already [celebrate](#) Easter on different dates.

But the Act requires that "regard shall be had to any opinion officially expressed by any Church or other Christian Body" before it is implemented.

In response to the question, Scully said: "There is no indication that the Churches are keen to move to a fixed Easter."

The date for the Easter public holiday can vary by more than a month. The earliest Easter can be is 22 March, with the latest possible date being 25 April.

NSS letter

NSS chief executive Stephen Evans wrote to Scully following the statement, saying churches' views on the Easter holidays are not "a legitimate basis for ignoring the needs of businesses, schools and families who are all inconvenienced by the fluctuating date."

He said the shifting date of the holiday causes "significant disruption". The Local Government Association and the Family and Childcare Trust have both expressed support for a fixed Easter school holiday to allow parents to arrange childcare more easily, he said.

He said the views of the business, retail and travel sectors "should also be given due consideration in this matter".

He called on the government to take the "necessary steps" to fix a regular date for the Easter holidays "without an elusive consensus from church leaders" if necessary.

He added: "This process should not be delayed indefinitely in anticipation of the longest running disagreement in Christendom being resolved."

Image: [Alexas_Fotos](#) from [Pixabay](#)

[Discuss on Facebook](#)

What the NSS stands for

The Secular Charter outlines 10 principles that guide us as we campaign for a secular democracy which safeguards all citizens' rights to freedom of and from religion.

- [Read the Secular Charter](#)
- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Disestablishment](#)

Related Campaigns

-

[Disestablish the Church of England](#)

A state religion has no place in a 21st century democracy.

[Read More](#)

Related Articles

[NSS announces major conference on protecting liberal values](#)

Kenan Malik, Joan Smith and more speaking at NSS Secularism 2024 conference in London. [Read More »](#)

New extremism definition may put free speech at risk, NSS warns

Proposed definition could 'label secularists as extremists'. [Read More »](#)

A state Church is no bulwark against extremism – but secularism is

With its commitment to the separation of religion and state and safeguarding the rights of all individuals, secularism can provide an effective defence against the spread of extremism, says Stephen Evans. [Read More »](#)

Report: CofE safeguarding “below standards” of secular institutions

Most victims and survivors unsatisfied with safeguarding approaches, while safeguarding 'weaponised' to remove those "seen as a nuisance", report finds. [Read More »](#)

Resist calls for £50m a year for churches, NSS urges minister

Churches trust also calls for churches to host NHS services. [Read More »](#)